Chapter 12

The Penetration of Islam into Mossi Country

Islam in the Land of the Mogho Naba

643 794 771 The Mogho Naba, like his subjects, is above all an animist, and it is hard to understand how he reconciles his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity.

The Mogho Naba, however, is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions and at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians celebrate Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends Midnight Mass. He keeps his cap on, however, just as the bishop wears his miter. In the same way he embraces Islam during the following three festivals: the moaghrem (the Mossi zembendé); Ramadan (nolokré, "to loosen the mouth"); and, finally, the zoulhési (the Mossi tabaski or kibsa).

797 Before describing how the Mogho Naba celebrates these Moslem festivals, we shall give a brief history of Islam among the Mossi and discuss the appointment of imams.

The Arrival of Islam among the Mossi

797 793 It was during the reign of Naba Doulgou, the twenty-third Mogho Naba [204] after Oubri, founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty, that Islam took root in the empire of the Mogho Naba, and it was at that time that an imam was appointed at Ouagadougou.

Naba Sawadogo, who succeeded his father, Doulgou, sent his children to the Koranic school. Many of them obtained a fairly good education there, and the eldest son, who later succeeded to the throne under the name of Naba Koutou, even became a marabout. The development of Islam in Mossi country dates from his reign, as does practice of giving children of the Mogho Naba Moslem names such as Saïdou, Mahama, Moumouni, etc.

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193 Gambaga Naba (chief of a vast territory in the British colony of the Gold Coast) was, as we have already seen [not translated], the father of Nyennenga, mother of Ouedraogo, the real founder of the Mossi empire. As is well known, any king tends to imitate an illustrious relative and to follow his lead in all matters which might lend him distinction.

This being the case, here is how Doulgou happened to install a marabout at his side. It is said that in addition to his many ministers the king of Gambaga had an imam whose duty was to settle all complicated matters. He was, at the same time, an intimate counselor of the king. Mogho Naba Doulgou, who ruled over a large territory and who felt that he was just as powerful as his ancestor, the king of Gambaga, decided that he, too, wanted to consult only an imam for certain affairs. The emperor had a friend [205] who was a marabout in the region of Zitenga and whose name was Moustapha. Doulgou summoned him to Ouagadougou and conferred upon him the title of Imam.

It goes without saying that neither the learning of this adept in Islam nor any of his other qualifications were checked and that he was not chosen by other marabouts. Thus, the Imam of the Mogho Naba is principally a court dignitary, just like the Ouidi Naba, for example, and, as such, his appointment involves certain barbaric procedures. This is why, after he has been given his turban and his burnoose (insignia of chiefdom) he is invited to a house called surbinda. In this sacred place he is handed a
[272] gourdful of a loathsome beverage, tibo, a mixture of human and animal blood, which all canton chiefs, all ministers, and all court officials must drink at the time of their appointment to make them incapable of treason or lese majesty. The imam takes up the gourd and utters the following sacramental words: "I shall never, under any circumstances, betray the Mogho Naba; I shall come to his aid in time of war; I shall execute without question all orders received from my King," etc.... He then pretends to drink some of the beverage and hands it to the Ouidi Naba who puts the liquid back into the copper jar in which it has been kept for nearly a thousand years. Once these formalities have been completed, he is the Imam of the Mogho Naba. As is

797 the case for canton chiefs and ministers, this position is handed
793 down in [206] the same family. Obviously a son is not called to succeed his father unless he has been educated well enough to settle, to the satisfaction of the emperor, the few questions which will be submitted to him. In any event, the choice will always fall on a member of the family of Moustapha, the first Imam.

Celebration of the Moslem Festivals by the Mogho Naba

796 Moaghrem (the Mossi zambende). The moaghrem marks the beginning of the new year of the hegira. Every Moslem family must feast on the evening before the holiday. The next morning, that is, on the tenth day of the month of Moaghrem [Muharram], the sourata, book of the year, is read, and one learns the name of the saint who will preside over the destiny of the world for the next 360 days. Alms are stipulated. This festival, which represents a return to joy, solemnly commemorates the day on which the Patriarch, Noe [Noah] (called Nabi Nouhou by the marabouts), alone blessed by the Lord, first set foot on dry land after the flood which exterminated mankind. This was a return to life, and it was the Day of Fire.

The Mossi have never understood the meaning of the Moslem festivals and celebrate them in their own way. They did not understand that the "Day of Fire" meant a return to family life, to cooking food over a fire, but instead made up a curious custom which is more reminiscent of the taking of the Bastille. On that day they light torches, chase each other about, and burn each other. This sometimes results in [207] real injuries which fortunately are easily healed.

The Silmissi (Peulh of Mossi country) do rather better since they sprinkle themselves with cool water. This represents at least a wish for good health.

796 The tabaski (zoulhési or Mossi kibsa). In the old days the Mogho
643 Naba was required to go to the great mosque at Zoaghna on the day of tabaski.

Yarnaba, chief of the Yarcé (Dioula whose ancestor, Koanda, came to Mossi country during the reign of Koumdoumié, the eighth Mogho Naba), has the duty of sacrificing the cattle and sheep

The Moslem Naba

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771 1. Virtually all of the inhabitants of Nobéré, Nobila, and Toécé (cantons in the present province of the Gounga Naba) are converts to Islam for reasons of personal convenience. They are the descendants of Naba Saga, twenty-second successor of Oubri.

2. The inhabitants of the villages of Doundoulma (descendants of Naba Kom, twenty-first successor of Oubri), Garpinné, and Kouila (descendants of Naba Doulgou or Roulgou, twenty-third successor of Oubri) are reputed to be devout Moslems. [211]

3. Kombissiri Naba Siguiri, circle of Ouagadougou.

4. Ramongo Naba Baongo, circle of Koudougou. Both of the above were descendants of Naba Warba nineteenth successor of Oubri, and were converted to Islam.

The present chiefs of these cantons are educated Moslems and possess mosques.

5. Sao Naba, a descendant of Naba Ouédraogo, circle of Ouagadougou, was converted nearly thirty years ago. His first teacher was a pilgrim returned from Mecca and a native of the village of Nakamtenga (near Kombissiri). He continued his study of the Korăn under the direction of Sayenouné Bathily, a marabout originally from Kaédi (Mauretania) who was such a formidable thaumaturge that the local administration had to send him home in 1916. Sao Naba has a mosque, but it would appear that the Moslem religion has not diminished his animistic beliefs since he continues to make sacrifices to the manes and to drink beer from time to time (on customary feast days, for example).

6. Gourpila Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is a former samand' biga of the present Mogho Naba and his conversion to Islam is recent, within the last six or seven years.

7. Boala Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is a devout Moslem.

8. Gaongo Naba (circle of Ouagadougou) is also a devout Moslem. [212]

[551
771] In conclusion let us point out that the present emperor continues the tradition of giving Moslem names to his children and has several of his sons in Koranic schools. There is no doubt that more of his children are being educated in these schools than in the official primary school. [213]

000 Obviously, our European civilization will undermine both these tendencies at the outset, and what will it bring in their stead? As soon as their education becomes sufficient to make them doubt the existence of spirits and the power of sorcerers, as soon as they come to feel that the only remaining power of their chiefs derives from a White who often lives at a distance of several days' march, but who hears grievances and listens willingly to charges against nabas, and that it is possible to have a naba imprisoned, or at least to cause him serious difficulties, as soon as this happens, the Mossi will hold up their heads. Since they do not lack independence when they are not afraid, their chiefs will lose all their authority, and anarchy will result. When superstitious beliefs lose their grip, the natives will become skeptics, and selfishness will reign supreme with its train of vices.

Christianity alone can avert this moral breakdown by furnishing a sound conception of authority and by replacing the fear of spirits and sorcerers with the fear or rather the love of God. The Church has always been the great initiating force of civilization, which does not consist merely of economic development or greater material well-being, but especially of the moral uplift of thoughts and feelings.

Indeed, the conversion of this people to Catholicism is but a matter of time and of tact and kindness on the part of missionaries. Anything may be obtained from the Mossi by those who gain their love, who win the respect of the nabas and if possible their understanding, if not their trust and affection, by showing regard for them and respecting their respectable side, who explain to all people, old and young, what is expected of them and make them understand their task thoroughly, for they are capable of grasping it, who make sure that those people over whom they possess some authority do carry out their tasks, and who can be firm when necessary.

[791] Alas! The missionaries are too few. To this day, there are but two missions and eight missionaries for the evangelization of 1, 500, 000 souls. One can only wish to see their numbers increase considerably, for there is no lack of locations favorable to the establishment of missions, and wherever missionaries settle and carry out their work, they will, by spreading Christian civilization, cause the acceptance, or better, the love of the rule of France who sends them /116/ in the name of God. There is need for haste. Islam may become a danger, and in a not too distant future important lines of communication will cut through the land. Railroads are drawing near, bringing with them

794 lightning as well, which he can do only if he is the Sky-Atmosphere.
[82] "The natural phenomena," he says, "are sometimes attributed to God. Lightning kills those who have done evil, it kills the animal ill-gotten through fraud or theft, and it is God who sends lightning as a punishment..." Thus, Ouendé, while being the sun, is also the Sky-Atmosphere, and other things too, for he has characteristics that go
● [797] beyond the sun divinity and the sky divinity. We must not forget here that the Allah of the Moslems is well known among the Mossi and has his established representatives there (Yarsé of Mandé origin, Peul, etc.), or temporary ones (merchants who have come from the north or south, Soninnké /Soninke/, Songhay, Dyoula). Thus, for a long time, /33/ the Moslem conception of god could and has, in effect, rubbed off on the sun-atmosphere-god of the Mossi. The latter might have waged war on the Songhay sultans who led religious crusades against them, yet it is also true that they were content to bestow upon their most important god the remarkable characteristics that struck them and that they admired in the Moslem god. Thus, Ouendé gradually became more and more a supreme god, although it would seem that in the beginning, he was only a sun god and an atmosphere god, first separated, later fused with a predominance of the sun god element.

To summarize, it has been well established that one finds the cult of the sun among the Mossi, along with many other elements as
[71] we have just shown. I have since found this cult among the Dorhosié (1922) and the Gouro (1923). However, among the Gouro, it is relegated to a few fetishists and does not interest the bulk of the population. Among the Dorhosié, on the contrary, it interests the vast multitude and occasions a solemn sacrifice made in the winter, at the end of the old year and the beginning of the new. Among these people, however, the sun divinity has not become a leading divinity as it has among the Mossi. It is one divinity among several and is rather subordinate to the cult of the Earth-brush and that of the Sky-atmosphere. Moreover, I am persuaded that more far-reaching studies among all the branches of the Voltaic population would uncover, here and there, the cult of the sun, as among the Mossi, the Gourounsi, the Dorhosié, etc.

[pp. 34 ff. not processed]

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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debt-free cultivation entitle the settler to permanent residence on the land he has been loaned.

Adaptation to the conditions of the new geographical setting in which the Mossi find themselves has been relatively rapid and easy. The Yatenga and the Niger project lie within the same climatic zone; the only important ecological difference between the two areas is the increased water supply resulting from irrigation. This change in the origin of the water supply, control of which provides a basic sanction of Mossi religion, was less disturbing to traditional belief than might have been anticipated.

Rather than diminishing their belief in their own religion, it only convinces the Mossi colonists that the forces of the natural order are different in their new habitat and accordingly must be controlled in a different way. Finding the indigenous inhabitants of the French Sudan, the Bambara, to be zealous Moslems, the Mossi settlers have accepted Islam as the religion of their new country. Confident that their religious obligations in the Yatenga will be taken care of by the elders who have remained behind, and with some pressure from those who have already become Moslemized, new arrivals rapidly embrace Islam as the system by which the supernatural forces governing their new environment can be manipulated.

Their acceptance of Islam has been as superficial as it has been rapid. There is time neither for the study of Moslem theology nor for the soul-searching which must precede the rejection of previously held religious beliefs. With a tradition which emphasizes the observance of religious form rather than intense emotional participation in ceremonial, their observance of the five daily prayers, taking of a Moslem name, deference to the marabout, and casual attention to certain dietary prohibitions should be viewed as their rational reaction to the fact of being in a strange land with an obviously different supernatural order which must be dealt with in a new way. Desire for a measure of control over this new supernatural order, pressure for conformity to the religious norms of their new social setting, and—perhaps most significantly—the permissiveness which characterizes the West African's acceptance of the existence of new supernatural forces, makes Islamization possible without the rejection of previously held religious ideas or practices.

In contrast to the relative ease of their adaptation to the natural and supernatural aspects of their new environment, their adjustment to the social situations which result from the change in economic organization has been most difficult. They must, of course, learn a new technology: the cultivation of rice and cotton by modern methods. Since the machines used for clearing the land and for the harvest are operated by

771 their traditional fear. Nevertheless, Captain Lambert says that
648 prior to the French occupation, Moslems were forbidden by the
[798] Moro Naba to /585/ say their prayers (kella) publicly. They merely recited their rosary (séki) silently.

• 797 Since the French occupation, the Mossi have lost all their prejudices against Islam, because they have been conquered by a different foe. In addition the Moslems tell them, as they do everywhere else in West Africa, that the Whites will only be vanquished and will only leave the country when everyone has become a Moslem. This leads the Mossi to start salaaming, and actually it is probable that there have been more conversions to Islam among the Mossi since our occupation than prior to it. This result, which may appear strange at first, is indubitable. Actually these conversions, although more numerous than they used to be, are still rare if we consider that the enormous majority of the Mossi population and the territory as a whole remains fetishistic.

Let us proceed to a description of Mossi religious customs.

781 First, the funeral ceremonies.

755 When a Mossi is ill he summons a soothsayer (bara in Mossi). The latter takes some earth and looks at it to see what will happen to the sick man. Then he states either that the latter will get well, on condition of obliging with a sheep and a chicken, or else that he will die. In the first case the requested chicken and sheep are brought to the bara, and then, if the sick person gets well, he gets something else, a sheep or 5,000 cowries. If the sick person dies, contrary to prediction, the family merely says that the bara was a liar and nothing else happens.

764 If the deceased is a man, it is the family elders who care for him. They stretch his limbs and even his fingers so he will not turn rigid immediately, and they close his eyes. Then one of the elders washes the corpse with cold water in the presence of the whole family. After this, the elders sew a shroud with cotton bands to wrap around the deceased, and then he is rolled up in a mat.

The soukala chiefs (we know that among the Mossi every household head is the head of a soukala) are buried in the courtyard /586/ of their soukala, or else before its gate. The grave diggers are fetched, and they dig a hole the size of a man, lay the corpse at the bottom, and place boards above it to prevent the soil from weighing

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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Christianity and Islam among the Mossi[1]

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• 797 THE twin forces of Christianity and Islam are both seriously contending for the conversion of the pagan masses of the Western Sudan. Islam first penetrated this region during the 11th century and succeeded in converting many people to its faith. Christianity arrived on the scene only 60 years ago, and has not had the time to win many converts. However, there remained many societies in this area which were largely pagan until European conquests exposed them almost simultaneously to the influences of both Christianity and Islam. One such society, the Mossi, has been described as the principal island of resistance to Islam in the Sudan (Gouilly 1952:52). André (1924:31) states that the Mossi "offered to the Animists an irreducible rampart against the invasion of Islam." And Delafosse concurs that the Mossi "seem to have been particularly hostile to Islam which has made no progress among them since the Hegira. And although an appreciable number of Moslem strangers (Yarsé) lived among them, they have almost all remained pagans" (1912, vol. 3:187).

The first Christian Catholic missionaries arrived in Mossi territory in 1900, just four years after French conquest. These missionaries were kindly if fearfully received by the people, who gave them land for building a mission and for cultivating crops. The Mossi helped the Christians cultivate these crops and willingly allowed the children to attend the mission school. Nevertheless, when the missionaries tried to convert the children to Catholicism, the parents objected and withdrew the children from school (Socquet 1956:62). The Protestant American "Assemblies of God" mission first worked among the Mossi in 1926, and in 1931 they reported that the outlook for conversions was "hopeful" (Cooksey and McLeish 1931:215). But from 1926 to date, the Protestants have made negligible progress in their conversions. There are today about 155,000 Moslems, 26,000 Catholics, and 1,760 Protestants in a Mossi population of over 1,500,000. These figures attest to the fact that despite a long history of resistance to foreign religious systems, many Mossi are now abandoning their traditional religion. But the figures also show that while Islam is gaining many converts, the Catholics are making only slight progress, and the American Protestants hardly any at all. There are obviously many reasons for the differential advance of these three religious systems. In this paper I will examine and analyze the processes by which these religious systems attempt to gain converts, and delineate the reasons for their differential success.

173 105 [186] The Mossi who are now feeling the impact of external religious influences represent the unique example of a Sudanese group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until French conquest in 1896. Tradition records that the first Mossi

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776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsẽtenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating prin-
774 ciple of man. First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places [761] where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead
775 or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs, in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

[827] The breath, called *vousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

175 The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, 197 then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

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pagan Mossi and the Moslem Songhoi fought several other battles until Songhoi power was broken by the Moroccans, who conquered Timbuktu in 1590. 175 797

The Moslems made no further attempt to convert the Mossi by force, but Moslem pressure did not stop; it now came in the peaceful guise of Moslem merchants and Yarsé Moslem refugees from the Mandingo cities such as Timbuktu and Djenne, who received permission from the Mossi rulers to settle in the country. However, judging from the reports of the first Europeans to reach the Mossi, the Moslems lived under many restrictions and were forbidden by the Moro Nabas to recite their prayers in public places (Tauxier 1912:585–586). Despite these restrictions, the Moslems were able to extend their influence through conversion of the cadet sons of the rulers and conversion of at least one ruler of the Ouagadougou Mossi dynasty.

About 1780 Naba Kom, the son of Zombré and a Yarsé Moslem woman, permitted the Yarsé to live in the villages and sent one of them to the Gold Coast for religious instruction. His son, Naba Sagha, was involved in a civil war and replaced some dissident pagan district chiefs with his Moslem sons. The present ruling lineage of Nobéré (where I worked) is descended from Ngado, one of these sons.[3] But although the rulers permitted their younger sons to adopt Islam, they themselves and the heirs to the thrones remained pagan in order to maintain the bonds with the ancestors. The exception to this rule was Doulougou, the grandson of Sagha, who was elected Moro Naba despite being a Moslem. Now the spread of Islam was given new impetus: Yarsé proselyting increased, mosques were built in Ouagadougou and in the villages, and many Koranic schools were founded. But with Doulougou's death the rulers reverted to paganism and Moslem influence declined. Nevertheless, the learned Moslem Imams continued to serve at court and used their knowledge of the outside world for the benefit of the rulers.

The Moslem Mossi showed the greatest hostility to the first Europeans who arrived in the country. The Imam of Yako, under the influence of his Tidjani son (who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca), refused to have any dealings with Europeans. Furthermore, he convinced the Moro Naba that death awaited any ruler who granted an audience to a European. When the French attacked the Mossi in 1896, an Imam from Béré, a former pilgrim, told the ruler to flee and not depend on his ill-equipped soldiers to defeat the gun-bearing invaders. Lamberth reported that the Moslems told the defeated and demoralized Mossi that "as soon as all the blacks become Moslems, the whites will leave" (Tauxier 1912:792).

No one knows how many Moslems were in Ouagadougou when the French arrived. Delafosse (1912, vol. 3:193) records that around the turn of the century there were about 42 Koranic schools with 230 students scattered around the country. Tauxier (1912:793), writing about the same period, states that there were 33 Koranic schools with about 358 students. No Koranic schools were reported for the Nobéré and Manga districts, but I know that there were several in the neighboring district of Béré. In 1926 there were 70 Koranic 175 797 871

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schools and 4,000 Moslems in Ouagadougou (seven percent of whom were non-Mossi). By 1944 there were about 240 schools and approximately 25,000 Moslems. The last census, 1954, did not record the number of Koranic schools but gave the figure of 60,000 Moslems in the Ouagadougou region.[3] The 4,000 Moslems of Nobéré comprise 42 percent of that district's population. With the exception of one Catholic school master and the Catholic catechist who came to the district during 1956, the population is pagan. It might be relevant to point out that Nobéré has the highest percentage of Moslems in Kombissiri, an administrative unit (a subdivision) which has 152,000 pagans, 23,000 Moslems, 3,000 Catholics, and about 100 Protestants.

As noted above, Islam first came into the Nobéré district with Ngado, who replaced a dissident pagan chief, but Ngado's lineal descendants reverted to paganism until a few years ago when the present district chief became a nominal Moslem. The cadet sons of Ngado did not revert to paganism, and today all the noble sublineages of the district are Moslem. We may note here that one of the main aspects of Islamic proselytization in this district, as elsewhere among the Mossi, has been the conversion of persons who do not hold strategic positions vis-à-vis the ancestors. The present chief is no exception to this rule, because he is only a nominal Moslem. His eldest son is the only one in the family who is not a Moslem—a status which is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain in a growing Moslem population. The chief himself became partially converted to Islam in gratitude to a Moslem Hausa trader who cured his illness. He recites the five daily prayers and observes most of the prescriptions of Islam, but he still drinks European beer, subscribes to many pagan rites and beliefs, and supervises the annual Péléga or sacrifice to the ancestors. This dual allegiance is politically expedient because the chief can function as the head of the Moslem community as well as the traditional head of all the people. He does have occasional difficulty with intolerant Moslems who wish him to become a devout Moslem, and with the traditionalists who claim that today the crops are smaller, the people sicker, and the women barren because of the neglect of the ancestors. However, with the approach of holy days, these differences are resolved in the interest of community harmony.

The chiefs of the villages under the overall command of the district chief are mainly pagan, since they are descended from the district chief replaced by Ngado. Yet they command villages inhabited by the noble Moslem sublineages of the ruling house as well as by commoner lineages. The village chief cannot become a Moslem because he too is responsible for sacrifices to the ancestors, without whose help his people would suffer. He does not take an active part in Moslem festivities, but receives the homage due a chief from the Moslems on these and other occasions. However, most village chiefs show an interest in Moslem affairs, and one of them, the chief of Vooko, built a prayer-circle (*mistori*) for Moslems who came to pay homage.

The pivotal role which the village chief plays in the exchange of wives between Moslems and pagans has led indirectly to the increase of the Moslem population. Before the French conquest he gave the Moslems more wives than

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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he received from them. This unequal exchange, plus the nobles' prerogative of seizing the wives of pagans, contributed to the increase of the Moslems.

The conversion of Mossi to Islam is sometimes accompanied by a rupture in the relationships between persons involved in "friendships" with a view of obtaining wives. A great quarrel developed in the district between a pagan chief and a recent convert who refused to give the chief a daughter promised as a wife. The chief became furious and claimed that the Moslem had broken a promise made years ago, but the Moslem claimed that it was against his new religion to give his daughter to a pagan. It is not true that Moslems in the village do not exchange wives with pagans, but the Moslems often try to convert their pagan friends so that the brides will not have to revert to paganism. The chief's difficulty was that he could not become a Moslem because of his ritual and ceremonial relationship with the ancestors. The Moslem men do not have such difficulties with their pagan wives because most women follow their husbands' dictates in religious and other matters. Many Moslem men attempt to prevent their wives from having sacrifices made to the ancestors, but if a woman really wishes such a sacrifice she can easily have it arranged through her pagan relatives. If a woman married to a Moslem refuses to observe Islamic practices, she is liable to divorce and runs the risk of having her children taken away.

Mossi anxiety over children is often instrumental in converting them to Islam. When a woman is barren or her young children die, she consults a soothsayer (*barga*). She is either told that her Tengkougre benefactor was not amply rewarded and recalled the children, or that her "Moslem" children (children who wished to be Moslems) were angry because they were given pagan names. In the latter case she is advised to make a gift to a Moslem and to ask her husband to build a Moslem prayer-circle outside his hut so that when her children "return" (are born again) they will see it. Finally, she is advised to give all her children Moslem names. I could discover no reason why the pagan soothsayers advise these anxious parents to adopt Islam, except that they hope that complicated prescriptions will be more efficacious. Nevertheless, so effective is this technique for gaining converts to Islam that even members of the family of the chief pagan priest are not immune to it. Furthermore, once a woman has a Moslem child, all her other children must be Moslems or they will die. A man whose children are all Moslem has no recourse except to adopt Islam if he wants a funeral, because his Moslem sons may not give him a pagan funeral.

Every Mossi, whether Moslem or non-Moslem, wishes a proper funeral, and now that travel has increased the fact of being Moslem or pagan is of great importance. Many young migrants to Ashanti have reported that their dead pagan comrades were unceremoniously disposed of, while the local Christians and Moslems took care of their dead coreligionists. But despite this fact, and the belief of administrators and missionaries, I found no evidence that the seasonal and other migration of Mossi youth to Ghana and the Ivory Coast have contributed very much to the spread of Islam. It is true that some of the thou-

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sands of Mossi who fled their homeland to escape forced labor or military service ultimately returned as Moslems, but the majority of seasonal migrants do not have enough contact with foreign populations for them to become Moslems. Most of the Mossi who migrate to Ghana work on cocoa farms far removed from large centers of population. It is also true that even those Mossi who worked for Moslems on the farms and found it expedient to "pray" (as the Mossi refer to conversion to Islam) soon reverted to paganism on their return in order to escape the displeasure of their lineage members. I have recorded several cases of pagans who became Moslems only when they returned from abroad to find their relatives all converted to Islam.

Today there are obvious rewards for those Mossi who embrace Islam; besides such tangible rewards as getting wives and children, there are the intangible ones of upward social mobility and greater prestige. It is important to note that most liberated slaves and serfs are now Moslems. Formerly these non-Mossi had low status, but today those who have been to Mecca bear such proud titles as *Hadji*. On the night before Ramadan, one of these men gave a talk before the Nobéré chief during which he chided the chief for his impiety and voiced the hope that the next chief would be a true Moslem. He admitted that the chief might interpret such a speech from a former serf as impertinence, but he begged him to accept the censure as coming from the servant of *Nabiyama* (the prophet). This same man had refused to pay homage to the chief at the annual sacrifice to the ancestors, and when admonished returned the daughter which the chief had given him as a wife. In earlier days a chief would not have given a daughter to a serf, and moreover, a disrespectful serf could be killed instantly.

Many French administrators and Christian missionaries allege that Mossi youth embrace Islam because they like the beautiful robes and red fezzes of the Moslems, but this is a naive explanation for the conduct of a highly sophisticated people. Most young men in Nobéré wear Moslem-type clothes because such clothes are the mode. Now that sun helmets, dark glasses, and women's raincoats with hoods are in vogue, pagans as well as Moslems wear them. What is of interest, however, is that when pagans become Moslems they wear cleaner clothes and affect a different style of life.

The local consensus is that Moslems are much better behaved than pagans because they do not swear, fight, or get drunk in public. The man chosen as Imam is required to have such characteristics as mercy toward evil-doers, benevolence, magnanimity, physical beauty, and virility. Yet many Mossi say that the Moslems can be worse than any other people. They accuse them of being charlatans, of selling Koranic verses as charms, and of committing murder by the use of magical formulae. Neither pagans nor Moslems believe that a man is necessarily good because he recites his daily prayers or goes to Mecca.

Moslems in the district follow most precepts of their religion: they recite the five daily prayers according to the rites of Tidjani (there are only two Moslems of the Hamada sect in the district and no members of the Hamallist sect), give alms to the poor, observe the month-long fast (called by the Mossi the

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794 efficacy of ancestor veneration and do not "kill chickens" to the ancestors, but
595 they maintain that it is a man's duty to have many wives so that he may have
842 children to succeed him. Furthermore, since Mohammed himself decreed that his followers may keep four wives, provided they treat each with the same degree of kindness, there is no conflict between Islamic tenets and Mossi practice of polygny. The average Moslem has two wives, but even the few men in the district who have more than four wives do not appear overly concerned about [582] transgressing the tenets of their faith. Mossi Moslems have not adopted the paternal parallel cousin marriage so common among other Moslems, and show surprise when told that Islam permits such marriages. However, they have modified their marriage behavior to harmonize with what they consider an Islamic tenet that "a man should not marry the widow of his father." The Moslem Mossi profess to look with horror on these marriages among their pagan brothers, preferring the levirate instead.

794 The Moslems' attitude toward the low status of women in Mossi society
562 has not changed, and in one respect it can even be said that this attitude has been strengthened. Many Moslem wives now cover their faces, and many El Hadjis have attempted to place their wives in purdah by preventing them from going to the market for fear they would come in contact with pagan men. The development of this practice is running counter to the growing emancipation of Mossi women, who have just begun to leave their villages for periodic visits to the larger towns. Nevertheless, the important fact is that the Mecca pilgrims have the opportunity to see Moslem women playing roles which are forbidden or unknown to Mossi women. And while it is true that the Mossi pilgrims would not easily adopt and foster monogamy, their receptivity to new Islamic beliefs and customs might have a liberating effect on their treatment of women. Once institutional and cultural changes have been accepted by the El Hadjis, they are likely to spread quite rapidly throughout the society because men who have visited Mecca are believed to have returned filled with wisdom and understanding.

797 Christianity came to the Mossi on January 24, 1900, shortly after French conquest. As noted above, the first missionaries were well treated, but the Mossi balked at the attempts at conversion. Nevertheless, by 1919 the White Fathers of the Catholic missions had established several centers, among which was the district of Manga where this study was conducted. Manga is considered a Catholic district, but there are only 3,000 Catholics out of a population of 124,000—which also includes 9,200 Moslems and five Protestants. [184] Thus, in contrast to Moslem Nobéré, which has no Catholics or Protestants, Manga, like most districts in Mossi territory, has a Moslem community.

The conversion of the Mossi in Manga to Catholicism follows the classical pattern of missionary proselytization in the country. Monsignor Socquet (1956:62) states that the Mossi always react to attempts at conversion with the statement: " 'We are looking at our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is favorable to it, then we will not go against his will.' " Socquet concludes: "It is thus understandable

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how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or, at least, their sympathy for our religion, in the spread of Catholicism." The missionaries may have been successful in the village of the Manga district chief because he was sympathetic to them, but they made few converts in the villages far from the district center or in the neighboring districts. In the Béré district, a few miles from Manga, the Catholics have made only 22 converts despite more than 15 years' work. In Manga, however, they were able to "recruit" most of the young children for their church and school. When an old man was asked why his children became Catholic, he tried to evade the question but finally replied that he did not control the minds of his children. Knowing the nature of administrative practice in the upper Volta before 1946, and the nature of Mossi family structure, we looked further for the answer.

Paradoxically, it comes from a Catholic missionary, André Dupont, who, seeking to discover the reason for the decrease of patients in the Catholic-controlled maternity clinics, asked:

> Why have the maternity clinics which in 1942 served more than seventy mothers a month now serve only two or three? "We are no longer forced to go," reply the villagers. Was it the fear of sanction which accounted for the unanimous use of the clinics? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have rendered odious an institution of charity. It would have been better if the mothers were only encouraged to use the clinics. "These natives do not understand," I am told sometimes. But how does one expect them to understand? (Dupont 1949:4)

Fear was certainly one of the reasons why the people in Manga embraced Catholicism. Before 1946 (the Brazzaville conference in 1944 abolished forced labor), men and women were recruited for work on the roads and on Ivory Coast plantations, and children were recruited for the schools. The district chiefs often gathered orphans and the children of their former serfs and sent them to the mission to fill the quotas, but many children and whole families voluntarily attached themselves to the missions. The reasons for so doing are legion, but in some cases it was simply the desire to accept the new religious faith.

Once at the mission the children were taught French and the tenets of Catholicism. Many of the boys later became catechists or priests and several girls went into the nunnery. However, the largest group of educated youths became the clerical personnel of the administration and were lost to missionary activity. Because the administration lacked French-speaking Mossi, the young people received good jobs. This desertion to the administration has become so serious that the missionaries at Manga have ceased to teach French to their catechists and now use the vernacular.

Conversion to Catholicism, bringing with it the knowledge of French, was formerly one of the sure roads to upward social mobility. Most Catholic teachers at Manga (and at Nobéré) are individuals who were recruited as unwilling school-boys but today are the highest paid members of their lineages. Other gains have accrued to persons who become Catholics. For example, the people at Manga believe that the missionaries used their influence with the

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797 555 administration to have one of their converts, a younger son of the late chief, elected to the district chieftainship over his elder brother. This belief is probably unfounded, since the Moro Naba seems to be electing the literate sons of chiefs to their fathers' positions so that educated chiefs, and not educated commoners, can serve as members of French parliamentary bodies. Unfortunately, the people of Manga do not understand modern political problems, and have accepted the new chief only because of their traditional respect for the chieftainship.

634 797 769 [602] The conversion of the Manga chief to Catholicism has not engendered many problems for his pagan subjects. The chief's primary duty—to begin the yearly ceremonial cycle of sacrifices to the ancestors—has been taken over by his father's brother, who is now considered the ritual head of the chiefly lineage. Nevertheless, to the chief still accrue the gains of this ceremony because his followers pay him homage and bring him gifts on his birthday, which comes at this period. Moslems in the community also pay their respects at this time, and they prefer his Catholic birthday celebration to the bloody sacrifices of chickens to the ancestors. On the other hand, the chief shows little of the common Catholic disapproval of Moslems and sends gifts to their leaders on the Moslem feast days. He also entertains the district Moslems when they come to pay him homage.

797 634 582 [562] The Catholic chief does not act as a pivot in the exchange of wives between pagans of his lineage and the other lineages. This task now falls to his father's brothers. Nevertheless, as district chief he is constantly involved with the marital problems involving pagan parents and their Catholic children. The main source of the difficulty is that Catholic girls are encouraged to refuse to join their pagan husbands when so ordered by their parents. The mission not only insists that the girl freely choose her own husband, but encourages her to reject a polygynous union. Catholicism thereby interposes itself between the girls and their society, not only impairing the prestige of their fathers and lineages but also giving the girls more freedom than they would ordinarily possess.

The pagans claim that by encouraging girls to choose mates without parental consent, the Catholics are really taking the opportunity to obtain wives for young Catholic men. Paradoxically, there seems to be some truth in this, since Bouniol, a White Father, states:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by [traditional] means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially as the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect!* (1920:160 italics mine)

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When a young Catholic receives a wife through the mission, he may visit her father and pay the customary respect by giving him kola nuts and brass coins. The father of a mission girl may accept or reject his son-in-law as he sees fit, but formerly he could not defy the power of the missions.

A pagan youth who wishes to marry one of the mission girls has to discuss the matter with the priests and swear publicly that he will become a Christian. Before 1946 the young man had to fulfill his promise or be intimidated by the chief and the missionaries until he relented or fled the district. Today, however, the priests usually abandon their efforts to obtain the conversion of the young men after three months have passed. In some cases the young men take their wives and move to other districts, and return only after the girls have given up Catholicism. Despite the lure of wives from the mission, not many young men become Christians on this account because the Mossi are still concerned primarily with family relationships and the effect that conversion would have on these relationships.

The church's prohibition of polygyny is by far the most serious bar to the spread of Catholicism. Many men do not adopt Catholicism simply because they fear that monogamous marriages would not produce children. Father Paternot (Considine 1954:103) has cited a study purporting to show that Christian Mossi have more children than the pagans, but the ordinary people of the district would not accept the facts he presented. They cite their personal experience to the contrary. Dim Delobson (1934:136), a Mossi converted to Catholicism, states:

> A certain number of Christians of my acquaintance whose wives did not have children during the first years of marriage had recourse to magical practices in order to get children. These simple people thought that although they had an omnipotent God beside them, they could impudently—after all the good priests will not know about it—ask the little, but also powerful gods to grant them some material favors here on earth. When the gods given children were taken for Holy Baptism, they were given Christian names instead of the names of the earth shrines, and they did not wear magical charms which would have indicated to the priest the real state of affairs. Nevertheless, the children were bathed in water to which magical potions were added, and when the mothers went to visit their parents, sacrifices of chickens were given to the benevolent Tengkougas.

The Mossi's strong desire for children is admittedly one of the main reasons for leaving the Catholic Church so that they can take other spouses in addition to barren ones. The church has now belatedly recognized this problem and, knowing that it cannot prevent men from taking plural wives, allows them to come to church but prohibits them from taking the Mass.

Many cultural factors besides the desire for children make polygyny important for the Mossi, and make conversion detrimental to the functioning of their family system. Because of lineage opposition to their conversions, some converts are forced to establish nuclear households—a practice out of harmony with the normal rhythm of Mossi life. The reason for this disharmony is that Mossi women married to Catholics must work alone instead of with

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595 co-wives and other women of the extended families. Even the Catholic hus-
797 bands would not help their wives with household tasks requiring more than
182 one person, nor would they violate tradition by chatting with their wives except at night in their huts. Another factor is that after the Mossi Christian
[846] woman has given birth to a child, she follows the traditional custom and goes back to her parents' home to remain there during the two or three years' lactation period. This imposes a great hardship on a Catholic husband because during this time he is left without wife or helpmate. In the extended family household there would have been women to take care of a man's material needs, and his mistresses would have taken care of his sexual needs. The Catholic can and does ask the mission for a young girl to take care of his material needs, but of course she is not expected to satisfy his sexual de-
[837] sires. Obviously this arrangement is not satisfactory, and many Catholic men, with the acquiescence of their wives, keep mistresses. Dim Delobson comments:

> Ouagadougou has a large number of Christians, but does this mean that these people in their love for the church respect all her rules? Alas! there are a large number of Christians who oblige their lawful wives to leave the conjugal couch and make way for the accommodation of mistresses . . . in conformity with the old custom. But this is a subject which is too delicate to discuss further. I only note it in passing: *Noli me tangere* (1934:169).

797 Despite the influence of tradition on Mossi Catholics, I feel it would be a
794 mistake to say that the complexity of Catholic dogma is one of the drawbacks to missionary success in this country. One Mossi has already been made a bishop of the Catholic Church, and most of the proselytizing in Manga falls on the two Mossi priests and the five Mossi nuns. Under the supervision of two White Fathers, the Catholic children and adults are acquainted with the dogma and rituals of the church. The festivals are well attended and celebrated with as much pomp as possible. Although the Mass is sung in Latin, the Mossi have adapted some of their traditional tunes to the Mass, and use their own language for prayers and hymns. Catholics observe all the sacraments including Confession—a sacrament which is hazardous from the Mossi point of view, because man must lay bare his innermost thoughts to the priests, who, in the final analysis, are Europeans and thus administrators.

It is true that even the staunchest Catholics in Manga have not abandoned all belief in traditional rituals and religious credos. For example, many
[754] Mossi Catholics believe in the existence of sorcerers, but the Catholic Church does not recognize the existence of sorcerers or such evil forces (I have met White Fathers who believe that there are unexplainable psychic and physical phenomena in Africa), and moreover has no way of dealing with them. "But," says Dim Delobson (1934:136), "the Mossi believe so strongly in the power of such entities, that even those converted to Christianity cannot always escape the action of malevolent practitioners." The result is that many Catholics desert the church when they believe that only traditional specialists can help them with personal problems. Catholic families easily aban-

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don Christianity when told by shamans that to do so is necessary in order to have children. Unfortunately, the panoply of saints in modern French Catholicism does not seem to be able to syncretize with or displace the local deities, and thus come to the aid of the Mossi. This weakness of modern Catholicism in West Africa appears to make it unable to deal with many of the insecurities which arise in the daily lives of its adherents.

The American Protestant missionaries were never able to establish stations in either Manga or Nobéré because of the relative strengths of Catholicism and Islam in these two districts. However, they do have stations in Po and Koubri, 30 and 50 miles away. The 1954 census lists five Protestants in Manga, but I could find only one family head who had been a Protestant and that during the period when he worked for missionaries. It is interesting to note that when he returned to his native Manga he did not become a Catholic but embraced Islam instead. Although Protestants among the Mossi are trying very hard, they are working under three handicaps: (1) the opposition of the local administration, (2) their own explicit cultural bias, and (3) the puritanical nature of their brand of American Midwestern Protestantism.

The first Protestant missionaries to arrive in 1926 reported: "There has often been opposition to the preaching of the Gospel in the district, and there is a continual under-current which has hindered many from accepting Christ" (Assemblies of God Mission 1934:14). Americans who wished to train the young Mossi to read and write found official opposition to the use of the vernacular for such purposes, and were obliged to receive French teaching certificates. When one recognizes that in those days less than one-tenth of one percent of the Mossi children were in schools (today the number is just over three percent) one cannot help feeling that any kind of education would have been useful to the Mossi. During the war the Pétain-oriented administration restricted the movements of the Americans and frightened off their converts. And finally, the Americans come under the general disapprobation with which the Mossi view most Europeans.

American Protestants are fairly well insulated from the Mossi population, and have only now begun to show any interest in Mossi culture and problems. Geoffrey Gorer, who visited the Mossi in 1935, wrote:

> There were some American missionaries in this village, a whole family living in a house filled with texts; I do not know what creed they preached, or with what success; they looked more like American missionaries than I had thought anyone could have done off the films . . . they spoke with a dispassionate "none of our business" disapproval of the ill treatment of the negroes, who they said were ruled entirely by fear (1935:149).

Many of the Protestant missionaries who are now working with the Mossi are still inclined to agree with the first missionaries' ethnocentric judgement of their customs:

> Moral standards are very low. Nothing is wrong until it is found out. Chastity is unknown . . . we questioned in vain many natives in search of a suitable Mossi word for "virgin." They all declared there was no such word in their language. . . . Many

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797 horrifying and degrading customs of theirs, we would not dare to put in print (Assemblies of God Mission 1934:12).

Given such reactions, it is not surprising that the Protestants take no opportunity to use "heathen" beliefs and practices to further their own work. When they do take an interest in village affairs, it is usually to aid some young woman having marital difficulties with her lineage members (Sanders 1953:43). Since most Mossi problems are ultimately concerned with women, one can take it as a general rule that they are not in sympathy with any religious system which aggravates this problem.

The American Protestants have the most puritanical religious regime of all the proselyting religions in this country. The Catholics forbid polygyny, and the Moslems prohibit the use of alcohol, but the American Protestants forbid polygyny, drinking native beer, smoking cigarettes, and chewing kola nuts. The result is that the Protestants find it difficult to gain converts, and are constantly weeding out "rice Christians" from their mission stations. One young Catholic informant said that he was very impressed with the Americans who drove up in their big cars and straightway "cried out the Evangelists." Asked why the missionaries did not get converts, he said that the Mossi were afraid of whites. This response, while true, is inadequate, but as one former Protestant said to me, "With the Americans one can do nothing." So far the American Protestants have made little progress and it is safe to predict that the puritan brand of American Protestantism is not going to make much headway among the Mossi.

The old pagan priest, seeing the steady advance of the new religious systems, tells the visitor that the traditional ways of the ancestors are disappearing and that now the Mossi must follow one of three ways: Allah (Islàm), Péredamba soré (Catholicism), or Americadamba soré (Protestantism). He is sad to see this happen, but even his grandchildren are now Moslems. In the struggle between Cathòlicism and Islam for adherents it is the general consensus that Islamic conversions are on the increase. Islam is gaining, not only because of the reasons already cited but also because the political situation, which has greatly changed since the Brazzaville conference in 1944, is still rapidly changing. Today the Moslems are gaining twenty converts to every Catholic convert, largely because the Mossi do not now fear official sanctions.
797 For example, the Manga mission installed a Mossi catechist in Nobéré with
798 the avowed purpose of gaining converts among Moslem and pagan children enrolled at the new state-run school. The people of the district initially refused to give their land for such a station, but were overruled by the administration through the chief. Although the teacher is a Catholic, he has not dared to encourage any of his students to join the church. The one pagan child who showed an interest in Catholicism was immediately ostracized and beaten by the other students. Shortly afterward, many Moslem parents attempted to withdraw their children from the school, claiming that the children could not attend Koranic classes and the public schools at the same time. But the teacher, realizing the source of their fear, told them that the school

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would remain entirely secular in nature. The Imam at Nobéré is positive that now the White Fathers do not have "force" behind them, no conversions will be made in the district. He said that the Moslems here do not rely on force to convert the pagans, and leave them alone if they resist persuasion to embrace Islam.

Mossi politicians who, for the most part, were trained by the Catholics and are still supported by the church, are careful not to offend their pagan and Moslem constituents. One internationally-known Mossi politician told a Nobéré audience that he had a Moslem name in addition to his Catholic name, and that he even attended a Koranic school. Although this admission did not help him gain the votes of the Moslems, he carried the district because he was supported by the chief and received the votes of the pagans. The politicians are now under pressure from the people to expand the system of public schools so that the road to social mobility, through education, would be open to pagans and Moslems as well as Catholics. Even in Manga, where the government-supported parochial school is adequate for the school population, there are plans to build a public school. The special prerogative of the mission schools to use noncertificated personnel on their teaching staffs is now being attacked by teachers who themselves were trained in these schools. These teachers are demanding that the government either cease paying salaries to the unqualified teachers in the mission schools or else employ similar persons in the public schools. Thus one of the most important channels through which the Catholics obtained converts is being consciously narrowed.

CONCLUSION

The spread of Islam in Africa south of the Sahara is one of the significant cultural events in this area. Islam is not only spreading at the expense of the indigenous religious systems, but is taking precedence over Christianity brought to Africa by the conquering Europeans. The reasons cited for the success of Islam over Christianity are legion. They include: the adaptability of Islam in contrast to the rigidity of Christianity (Greenberg 1946:70; Goilly 1952:173; Marty 1917:283); the simplicity of Islamic doctrines, as opposed to the complexity of Christianity (Delafosse 1931:236; Quellien 1910:38–39); and the "imponderable factors" brought about by European conquest (Goilly 1952:261–266).

In this paper I have shown that Islam has made greater progress than has Christianity among the Mossi because:

(1) Christianity has a negative appeal to the Mossi because it was brought by their conquerors. For the proud Mossi, Christianity is intimately linked with their first real invasion, defeat, and occupation by aliens in their long history. In contrast, Islam has penetrated the country by peaceful means after its initial failure at proselytization by means of the jihad.

(2) In the early period of this century, the European administration recruited Mossi men and women for forced labor at home and in the Ivory Coast, and recruited children for the mission schools. But as soon as forced

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797 labor was abolished and the Mossi could do as they wished, mission school and church attendance declined, and the Mossi mothers even refused to attend the Catholic maternity clinics. During this entire period, the Moslems were propagating the ideas that recruitment for forced labor and other injustices would cease only when all the Mossi embraced Islam.

(3) Catholicism attempted to break down the Mossi social system during the period when their political system was rendered practially impotent. But while the Mossi could not forcibly oppose the effects of French policy on their political system, they effectively neutralized the church's attempts to disrupt their social system. In contrast to Catholicism, Islamic practices and tenets harmonized with many aspects of the Mossi social system, especially with regard to polygny and the status of women. Many Mossi converted to Islam in order to fulfill the prescriptions of pagan shamans, who linked conversion with the acquisition of children to continue the lineage. Christianity did not admit the existence of the tradtional supernatural forces, and evolved no techniques for dealing with the Mossi's belief in the efficacy of such forces. In the sphere of social mobility, Islam permitted the most illiterate emancipated serf to make a p. image and return an honored El Hadj, while only the most brilliant scholar is able to become an official in the Catholic community.

(4) More of the young men who leave their homes to serve in the armed forces or spend long periods away as laborers return as Moslems than as Christians. There is, however, no evidence that the increased Islamization of the Mossi is due to the heavy seasonal migration of young men to Ghana and Ivory Coast.

(5) American Protestantism, although not associated with French administrative policy, was negatively received because its missionaries were Europeans (whites). Furthermore, the extremely intolerant Protestant attitude toward the traditional Mossi religion and the puritanical nature of their religion made their efforts at conversion highly unsuccessful.

(6) The increase of public schools is lessening the importance of Catholicism and the Catholic school as the only means of social mobility through education. The newly emancipated pagan and Moslem masses are forcing the Catholic-trained Mossi politicians to act in the interest of their constituents, even if at the expense of the missions and Catholicism. The Catholics have consecrated the first Mossi bishop and have installed him in his see, but the return of each plane-load of Mossi Hadjis from Mecca spreads Islam into the remotest villages.

NOTES

114 [1] This article is an expanded version of a paper read at a meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago, 1957. The field work on which this analysis is based was conducted among the Mossi of Ouagadougou from November 1955 to January 1957, and was made [122] possible by a Fellowship from The Ford Foundation African Studies Program. Needless to say, all ideas contained herein are my own. During these months among the Mossi I lived both in the predominantly Moslem district of Nobéré, and in the district of Manga, which has a fairly

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636
646 the Kaya people to their new chief. However, in Manga the proposed
666 election of a young chief over his four elder brothers did cause some
662 concern and talk about Catholic machinations because the nominee was of that faith. But there was no overt opposition to him once he had been elected. His elder brother accepted the wishes of the Moro Naba with good graces even though he remains a rather tragic individual.

643 The differential treatment that the Manga Naba receives from the
636 administration is obvious to everyone. Whereas the other district chiefs are still summarily summoned to the administrative center, and kept waiting, the Manga Naba sends his assistants to represent him. When the Governor of the Haute Volta came to Manga to make it an administrative subdivision, he was entertained by the Manga Naba while the neighboring district chiefs celebrated outside. It was the political power of this educated chief which was responsible for Manga becoming an administrative subdivision even though it is located several miles from the highway which runs between Wagadougou and Ghana. Furthermore, the population of the neighboring district all complain that Manga's population has gained a disproportionate share of all the services provided by the governmental agencies whose headquarters are there. The fears which the Manga people and the other Mossi have had over their chiefs being Catholic have not materialized in Manga. Of course, the Manga Naba does perform the rituals on the
[769] day of the ancestral feasts. These rites are now being performed by his father's brother who has become the ritual head of the ruling lineage (and it is possible that this line may become the line which performs this task for the now "secular" chief). However, when the
[197] chief celebrates the anniversary of his conversion to Catholicism at the mission, afterwards he holds court in his house where he receives from Catholics, Moslems, and pagans alike, the gifts he normally would have received in the feast of the ancestors.[6]

The most important function of such Mossi chiefs as the Manga Naba is to defend the interests of the Mossi people in the territorial assemblies and the French councils and assemblies while preserving the ruling tradition of the descendants of Wedraogo and Wubri. In his capacity as politician-chief, the Manga Naba joined a fellow Mossi of rather humble origin in sponsoring several bills in the Assembly of

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spirits. The chiefs could not refuse such requests, especially when the villagers were poor, because they were regarded as "fathers of their people." In some cases, however, district chiefs had to protect their subjects against unscrupulous Tengsobadamba who took advantage of local crises and tried to prey upon the villagers by refusing to perform the requisite sacrifices unless they received substantial gifts. The ensuing struggle was between the secular and the sacred; between the chief as a representative of the conquerors, and the Tengsoba as a member of the conquered group. It was always resolved in favor of the Mossi chief, who never permitted his Tengsobadamba the same privileges held by religious practitioners in neighboring societies.[9] The Mossi chiefs recognized that they needed the Tengsobadamba, and many myths recount how invading Mossi chiefs went into the woods where the Tengsobadamba were hiding to beseech and eventually force them to return to their districts so that sacrifices might be continued. On the other hand, the Mossi chiefs always insisted on the primacy of the nam over any other power. They employed the Tengsobadamba to intercede with Tenga for the welfare of their subjects, but they never allowed the priests to control them.

The coming of Moslems to the kingdom of Ouagadougou had little effect on the way in which the Mogho Nanamse used the traditional religious system to bolster their political power.[10] In fact, the Mossi rulers later used Islam and its adherents in the same manner as they had used the aboriginal religion. The Moslems first tried to subdue the Mossi in the fifteenth century by persuasion, and later by the jihad. Both attempts failed, but the Moslems finally entered Mossi country as refugees from Sudanese wars. Their fortunes waxed and waned, depending on whether they were befriended by the ruler in whose territory they lived. During certain periods, they were subjected to many restrictions and were forbidden by the Mogho Naba to recite their prayers in public places.[11] At other times, they were left free to practice their religion, and even succeeded in converting several Mogho Nanamse to Islam. Under converts such as Savadogo (ca. 1760), Islam spread into many districts and gave rise to such important local centers as Sakhaboutenga (Dakay).

The Moslems in Ouagadougou were represented at the court by their Imam. This person even received his badge of office—a white turban and white robe—from the Mogho Naba, and had to swear in the name of Allah and *Nabiyama* (the prophet Mohammed) to be faithful to him, obey him, and aid him in times of need. However, he did not have to drink the namtibo as suggested by Dim Delobson; nor did he have to observe such non-Moslem customs as drinking the millet beer the Mogho Naba provided for

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not enter Mossi territory. Nevertheless, he obtained rather precise information on the important caravan routes leading from Timbuktu through the Mossi trade centers of Ouagadougou, Kaya, Yako, and Koupela, down to Salaga and other towns in Ghana, and even across to Sansane Mango in Togoland. His data on the Mossi are invaluable:

> The whole triangle interposed between the Niger toward the north, and the country of the Eastern Mandingoes or Wangarawa toward the south, appears to be inhabited by a single race of people whose language, although they are divided into several states and nations, nevertheless appears originally to have been the same stock. It is very probable that this race in ancient times occupied the whole upper course of the Niger, and that this tract may have been wrested from it in later times by the Songhai and the Mandingoes, especially that section of the latter which is generally called Bambara. These are the Gourma toward the N.E., the Tombo toward the N.W., and between them the Mossi. . . . The strongest among these pagan kingdoms five centuries ago, and even at the present moment, is that of the Mossi, although the country is split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only some slight homage to the ruler of the principality of Woghodugo.[7]

Europe learned more about the Mossi from Sigismund Koelle, who visited Sierra Leone in 1854. His informant was one Andrew Dixon, who had lived in Koupela before being captured and sold into slavery. He furnished information on the location of the Mossi, their wars with the Busansi, and their important commercial and political relations with the Ashanti.[8] Koelle's report, taken in conjunction with the reports of Dupuis, Bowdich, Clapperton, and Barth, shows that the Ashanti, like the Hausa and other coastal peoples, were protecting their trade when they attempted to isolate the peoples of the interior from the Europeans. But as soon as the British defeated the Ashanti in the war of 1873–74, the Sudan was opened and adventurers poured in. In 1877 and 1878, two missionaries of the Basel Mission visited the northern regions of Ghana, and subsequently gave a good description of Mossi commerce in that area.[9] Lonsdale, who visited Salaga in 1881, found among the traders in the market "the Mossi with his cattle, sheep, and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides."[10]

The activities of the various European nations in West Africa and other regions at this time led to military and diplomatic difficulties, which the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 was convened to resolve. Agreement was reached to assign "spheres of influence" to the various European nations, to regulate trade, and to provide for arbitration between rival claimants of conquered or "protected" territories. In West Africa, this meant the end

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the status of women. They maintained that the French had conquered the Mossi men, not the women, and that the administration should not interfere with the way in which a Moaga treated his wife. Ironically enough, there was little the administration could do for the Mossi women, since the latter were too timid to approach the Europeans. Most of them continued to react to maltreatment from their husbands by running away, but now they went to the Gold Coast with labor migrants instead of returning to their lineage.

Although the Mossi chiefs had little autonomy in the administration of their subjects, and had to look to the administration for guidance in nearly everything they did, they were not completely powerless. They were the representatives of the colonial administration on the local level, and as such they could control their subjects through the differential allocation of prestations. Those Mossi who had maintained the traditional respect for the chiefs could look forward to less arduous tasks for the administration and to the avoidance of forced labor or army recruitment. Those who by their actions or attitude indicated that they had lost respect for the chiefs were penalized accordingly. Chiefs were also able to retain some control over their subjects because they were still the centers of social, economic, and political relations within their territories. They still received homage and presents from their more loyal or traditionalistic subjects, and with these goods and services they could bind other persons to themselves. Clever chiefs were able to manipulate the colonial administration and use it to enhance their traditional position so successfully that the administration and the missionaries had to take these men into account whenever they wished to establish contact with the population.

The desire of the missionaries to establish missions and schools for the purpose of converting the Mossi to Christianity presented the chiefs with a great challenge because, unlike the administration, the missionaries tried to establish direct contact with the people. The chiefs not only did not like to have Europeans living in their midst, but feared that they would lose control over their subjects who went to live near the missions. However, the chiefs could not refuse to grant the missionaries land on which to build missions and schools. They also provided labor for them, just as they did for the construction of administrative buildings and roads. Similarly, the chiefs recruited children for the mission schools in the same spirit as they recruited students for the schools of the administration. The difference between the Catholic missionaries and the administration with respect to education was that while the former were interested in educating the children of chiefs, they were also interested in children from other backgrounds. Nevertheless, the majority of chiefs continued to send to school

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only those children whose parents could not prevent them from being sent away. Many of the boys came from serf and commoner families; a few others were the orphan sons or very young sons of chiefs. As a result, few of the chiefs' sons received an education, and thus they were later unable to compete effectively with commoners who had gained a valuable education at the missions.

Acknowledging the average Moaga's refusal to adopt Catholicism as long as his chiefs remained pagan, the missionaries made a valiant attempt to convert the chiefs. Monsignor Socquet reports that when asked why they did not become Catholics most Mossi replied: " 'We are looking to our chief,' that is to say, 'We will follow our chief in conversion as in all other matters. If he is in favor of it, we will not go against his will.'" Socquet concludes: "It is thus easy to understand how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or at least their sympathy for our religion, to the spread of Catholicism."[41] However, the chiefs and their eldest sons were the most difficult to convert because they were responsible for supervising and carrying out the traditional sacrifices to the royal ancestors, without whose help the Mossi people believed that they could not survive.

The attempts of the missionaries to recruit as many girls as possible for education and conversion alienated the chiefs, because it got them involved in the delicate problem of the status of women and struck at one of the few remaining bulwarks of their traditional power. The problem was that many of the girls whom the missionaries wanted as students were or had been betrothed, or were actually living in their husbands' compounds, when they were taken to the mission. Here the girls were educated and, in the words of Sister Marie-André, "wished to abandon those practices" that were "repugnant to them"—i.e., they rejected polygynous marriages and desired to choose their own spouses.[42] Those men who lost fiancées or wives as a result of missionary activities sought redress from their chiefs. But the chiefs were powerless against the missionaries, and after the promulgation of Hesling's circular nothing could be done. Many Mossi chiefs were also parties to the defeated marriage alliances because of their involvement in the pughsiure system. Because their prestige and power were at stake, and because they were unable to combat the Europeans openly, these chiefs often used devious means to spirit away the girls from the missions and to return them to their fiancés or husbands. Such activities angered the missionaries, who through the administrators either punished the guilty chiefs or sought new legislation in this area.

The chiefs, the missions, and the French administration were perpetually embroiled because both the chiefs and the missions wanted Mossi women for their own purposes. The administration was caught in the

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middle. The Mossi accused the missionaries of being especially anxious to get girls who could become the wives of their converts, and accused them of "stealing" the women. Paradoxically, this charge is supported by a missionary of the White Fathers:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by traditional means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially since the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect.* [Italics mine.][43]

The Mossi chiefs objected strongly to these activities of the missionaries on behalf of their converts, for they insisted that marriages could not legally take place outside the traditional pattern of reciprocity in woman exchange. They argued that the priests had no daughters, but that once they had obtained wives for their male converts, the daughters of these converts would in fact be pughsiudse to the priests and would be used by them to obtain further converts. There was some truth in this argument. Some young men, anxious to obtain wives without trouble and hard work, approached the mission girls, only to be told that the missionaries alone could sanction their marriage. The priests asked only that the potential husbands become Catholics. Some young men agreed and became Catholics; others reneged on their promise after they had been baptized and married. When a young man left the Church himself and also forbade his wife to go to church, the missionaries sought help from the district chief. If he did not satisfy them, they asked the district commander to intervene on their behalf. The young man then had to return to the Church with his wife or leave the district. Many men chose the latter course, taking their wives to visit some distant relatives or to the Gold Coast, until the women, burdened by motherhood and reintegrated into the traditional social system, lost all desire to renew their association with the missionaries. Under these circumstances, the missionaries could not summon the couple to the administrative center, because they had not violated any of the tenets of the Governor's circular. Furthermore, most administrators, like the Mossi chiefs, had little interest in such cases.

The Mossi chiefs considered the Catholic missionaries a greater threat

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to Mossi society and to their own authority than the French administration itself. This was primarily due to the fact that these missionaries, as Frenchmen, were very deeply involved not only in preaching Christianity, but also in changing Mossi society by introducing modern medical practices and education. Moreover, as was later brought out, they did not hesitate to use coercion to gain their ends. In seeking to understand why the number of patients in a maternity clinic had declined from an all-time high in the late 1920's and early 1930's to almost zero in the late 1940's, André Dupont, a Catholic missionary, was told by Mossi women, "We are no longer forced to go." He comments: "Was it the fear of sanction that accounted for the unanimous use of the clinic? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have made a charitable institution odious. It would have been better if the mothers had only been encouraged to use the clinics. 'These natives do not understand,' I am sometimes told. But how are they expected to understand?"[44]

The American Protestant missionaries did little to challenge the authority of either the Mossi chiefs or the French administration. They were interested only in religious education, and concentrated on teaching the Scripture. The British social critic Geoffrey Gorer, who visited the Mossi during the Hesling period, reports: "There were some American missionaries in this village, a whole family living in a house filled with texts; I do not know what creed they preached or with what success. . . . They spoke with a dispassionate 'none of our business' disapproval of the ill treatment of the negroes, who they said were ruled entirely by fear."[45]

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The Moslems, on the other hand, took advantage of the declining power of the Mossi chiefs to spread their doctrines. They pointed out, with little fear of contradiction, that formerly the chiefs had checked the spread of Islam in order to protect their own religion, which supported their political power, but that this power had now been broken by the French. They continued to preach that as soon as all the black people became Moslems the whites would leave, and pointed out that whereas the missionaries had succeeded in getting the administration to attack the marriage customs of the pagan Mossi, they had not interfered with the marriage customs of the Moslem Mossi.[46] Moreover, the Moslems tried to impress upon the chiefs that conversion to Islam brought with it the benefit of being judged according to Koranic principles rather than native law or French statutes. This propaganda was relatively successful, and by the end of the Hesling period the number of Koranic schools and converts among the Mossi had increased eightfold. True to form, however, the Mossi chiefs seldom adopted Islam or permitted their elder sons to do so. But they did allow

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their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active resistance to Islam.

Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to tolerate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard, Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office], just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]

Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition: cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000 francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

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000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the genealogy does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son.

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20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times."

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21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II.

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22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569–70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers.

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

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24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic missionaries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his lifetime. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners, he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles.

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25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue.

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26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives.

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

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30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach.

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

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32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov-

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1. Dim Delobson, pp. 153ff.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 251–54.
3. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 674.
4. Crozat, p. 484.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Skinner, "Trade and Markets," pp. 237–38.
7. Barth, III, 644–48.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 202–4.
9. Dubois, pp. 282–92, 300.
10. Great Britain, Parliamentary papers: Cd. 788–27, No. 357, Acc. Papers, Vol. LXIV (1902).
11. Marc, p. 178.
12. Binger, I, 467.
13. Crozat, p. 484.
14. Binger, I, 465.
15. Mangin, p. 23.
16. Dim Delobson, pp. 83–86.
17. Ruelle, p. 679.
18. Bovill, p. 244.
19. Gautier, p. 139; cf. Mangin, p. 112.
20. Cf. Sa'di, p. 168.
21. The chief of the Kamboinse was the only Mossi "chief" to possess a stool, which is indicative of an Akan origin. The Akan origin of this group is further supported by Koelle's evidence: a Mossi informant told him that the Mossi called the Ashanti "Kamboinse" (Koelle, p. 6).
22. Skinner, "The Mossi 'Pogsioure,'" pp. 20–22.
23. Cf. Ouddrango and Prost, pp. 16–18.
24. Dim Delobson, p. 25.
25. Binger, I, 470.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 502–4.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 504–5.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 456.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 502.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Cf. Dim Delobson, p. 156. He speculates that the Mogho Naba himself sacrificed the animals in the presence of his senior wife and courtiers.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
3. Tauxier (*Le Noir du Yatenga*, p. 379) reports that a comparable ceremony among the Yatenga Mossi was called the "Bega," and that in reality it was a Pulse ceremony "adopted by the Mossi." According to him, both the Pulse and the Mossi held this festival in order to obtain good harvests the following year, and made sacrifices to "the ancestors, to the Earth, and to God."
4. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 588.
5. Dim Delobson's description (pp. 148 ff) of the Tenze differs somewhat from that given to me by my respondents. According to his version, the Tanaoba played the role I have ascribed to the Larhalle Naba. Furthermore, he states that the Tenze was held on Friday, an impossible fact since Saturday is the Mossi "day of the dead." In any case, all of my respondents insisted that Saturday, and not Friday, was the day on which the Tenze was held. It is possible that Dim Delobson mistook the eve of the festival for its beginning, in which case his error is understandable. In most other respects our descriptions are not too different.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
7. There is a widespread tradition in Mossi country that the Tenkodogo Naba made and still makes similar sacrifices at Kourougousenga and Sansabloga, two important earth shrines. There is a controversy about whether human sacrifices were ever offered there. The missionaries in the region claim they were. The Mossi deny this and accuse the missionaries of slander.

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When one asks the Mossi directly, "what is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capitals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Christians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional ancestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies except those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more persons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

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shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later, but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women sometime kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medicine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However, when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga*, the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadambá* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to